

The history of dreaming

Ancient Egypt. The Book of the Dead, one of Egypt's most important repositories of religious authority written around 3000 B.C., provides prayers to banish nightmare spirits and instructions for incubation rituals - the practices carried out before sleep that cause a person to dream about a particular topic.

Ancient China. The Chinese consider the dreamer's soul to be the guiding factor of dream production. The hun, or spiritual soul, is thought to leave the body and communicate with the land of the dead during sleep.



Biblical dreams. The Bible includes literal message dreams that come from God or angels providing divine warnings, orders or promises.

1350 B.C. Chester Beatty papyrus, discovered in Thebes, lists images and magical rituals to ward off the effects of bad dreams. The Egyptian dwarf god Bes, who wore a lion suit, was believed to protect sleepers against the demons of the night and send them pleasant good dreams.

Seventh Century B.C. First lengthy record of dreams is recorded on clay tablets in Assyria, chronicling the adventures of Gilgamesh. In this epic poem, the legendary king reports his recurring dreams to his goddess-mother Ninsun, who makes the first recorded dream interpretation.

469-399 B.C. Hippocrates, the father of medicine, writes *On Dreams*, providing the first discussion of dreams from a medical standpoint. He believes dreams are a potent diagnostic tool in ascertaining the patient's state of physical and mental health.



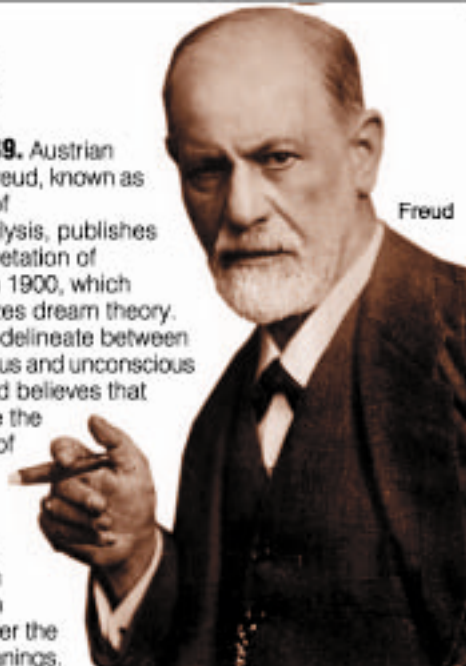
Hippocrates

384-322 B.C. Aristotle believes that the movement of blood in our sensory organs causes certain images to arise in dreams. The first subtle symptoms of an impending illness might make themselves known to the dreamer. He does not believe dreams are divinely inspired.

200 B.C. to 500 A.D. The Talmud, the collection of Jewish laws and traditions, includes many writings about dreams that reflect Hebrew, Egyptian, Babylonian, Greek and Roman influence. Dreams are described as omens or prognoses of one's illness. At the time people were encouraged to fast to obtain a dream that predicts the future.

European Middle Ages: Devastating plagues decimate populations and upset the religious, economic and social status quo. Belief in dreams as a channel to God fade and are replaced with broad beliefs in the demonic powers of dreams. Most educated people identify dreams with superstition.

1856-1939. Austrian Sigmund Freud, known as the father of psychoanalysis, publishes the "Interpretation of Dreams" in 1900, which revolutionizes dream theory. The first to delineate between the conscious and unconscious mind, Freud believes that dreams are the acting out of repressed desires, many sexual. He believes an analyst can help uncover the hidden meanings.



Freud

1875-1960. Swiss psychiatrist Carl Gustav Jung believes that dream contents provide us with revelations that uncover and help to resolve emotional and religious issues, problems and fears. He believes we can interpret our own dreams without an analyst.

1893-1970. Frederic "Fritz" Perls founds the school of Gestalt therapy, which is based on the belief that everything in one's dream is an aspect of the dreamer. Therapy involves a person acting out his dream.



Alfred Adler

1870-1937. Psychologist Alfred Adler believes there's a direct connection between the waking life and dream life. The less one dreams, the healthier one is psychologically.

1903-1990. Medard Boss believes there is a connection between dreaming and existentialism. Dreamers should let dream images speak for themselves.

1953. Physiological basis for dreaming is confirmed in the discovery of REM sleep by researchers at the University of Chicago.

1960s and 1970s. Scientists begin to look at lucid dreams. Stephen LaBerge at Stanford University later develops methods for observing lucid dreamers in the laboratory and enhancing the lucid experiences.

1977. J. Allan Hobson, a Harvard Medical School psychiatrist, and colleague Dr. Robert McCarley, propose the activation-synthesis model of dream production, explaining that the motivating force of dreaming is not psychological, but is caused by the brain's reaction to random nervous system stimuli that occur during sleep.

1983. Association for the Study of Dreams is founded to promote research into and acceptance of how dreams can be used in everyday life.

Mid-1990s. PET scans studied by researchers at University of Pittsburgh and elsewhere for the first time identify active areas of the brain during REM and non-REM sleep.